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Field Operations Memo 96-8
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TO: Local Office Staff

FROM: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

RE: Proper Use of Dependent Numbers - Category 9

Introduction

Correct use of dependent numbers when establishing or reopening cases or when performing case maintenance activities is essential to avoid problems with the Priority Reporting Integrated System Match (PRISM) system.

Currently, PRISM is in use only for Category 9 cases; however, with the prospect of PRISM being in place across categories, it is important that proper procedures involving dependent numbers be followed by all case workers.

This memo

- explains the specific situations which result in PRISM match-related problems;

- describes the proper procedures to be followed in each situation; and

- provides examples of typical case scenarios applying to each of the described procedures.

PRISM

- is unable to process reassignment of dependent numbers to new individuals within a case, or assignment of more than one dependent number to an individual within a case; and

- cannot process multiple changes, in one transaction, in the client profile section of the PACES Input Document (PID) or Turnaround Document (TD).

In any of the situations described above, PRISM "crashes," preventing the matching process.

Remember, always check PACES to review the case status and dependent number assignment before (re)opening or making any changes to a case.

PRISM PROBLEMS, CORRECT PROCEDURES, and EXAMPLES

Dependent Number-Related Problems

Problem 1: An individual is assigned a dependent number which has already been assigned to a different individual within that case.

Procedure: Once a dependent number has been assigned to an individual in a case, that number cannot be assigned to any other person in that case. Use the next available sequential dependent number for any subsequent individuals added to the case.

> Example: PACES shows a closed Cat. 9 case for Ms. X (dependent 00) and her son John, dependent 01. She now reapplies for food stamps for herself and baby Jane and states that son John is no longer in the home. In this instance, although John is no longer in the home, dependent number 01 cannot be reassigned to Jane. Use the next available dependent number (02) and leave dependent 01 in a closed status.

Problem 2: A particular dependent in a Category 9 case is assigned a new dependent number within the same case.

Procedure: Once an individual has been assigned a dependent number in a Category 9 case, he/she cannot be assigned a different dependent number within that case.

> Example: Mr. and Mrs. Y reapply for food stamps for themselves and their two children, Ann and Bob. A previous Cat. 9 case exists on file with Mr. Y, dependent 00, Ann, dependent 01, Bob, dependent 02 and Mrs. Y, dependent 99. Ann is now 20 years old, not attending school and working part time. This case should be reopened using the same dependent numbers that appear on PACES. Do not assign a dependent adult number (90-99) to Ann even though she is now an adult. Keep the original dependent number regardless of the age of the dependent. As Ann's income is countable, a PACES Worksheet must be submitted with the PID that reopens the case.

Recipient Profile Section-Related Problems (Section VI on TD/PID)

Problem 1: A case is established using Action Reason 03 and Section VI of the PID is not completed, or the case is reopened using Action Reason 03 and the appropriate dependents are not also reopened in Section VI.

Procedure: When establishing or reopening any case using Action Reason 03, be certain to open each appropriate dependent in the household in Section VI of the PID also using Action Reason 03.

Problem 2: More than one change at a time is made in the Recipient Profile section of the TD (Blocks 82, 83, 84, 85) for a Category 9 recipient/dependent.

Procedure: For Category 9 cases, do not make more than one change in the Recipient Profile section (Blocks 82, 83, 84, 85) for an individual. If more than one change is necessary, submit two or more TDs on successive days to change demographic information.

> Example: A Cat. 9 recipient reports that her ATP was issued with her name misspelled. Additionally, the worker notices that two digits in the same recipient's date of birth have been transposed. The correction of these two errors must be a two-day process for PRISM purposes. On Day One, submit a PACES TD/PID to correct the name spelling; then on Day Two, submit a TD/PID to correct the date of birth. Although PACES allows two such changes to be processed on the same day, PRISM does not and will stop the matching process if it encounters such changes.

Correction of Dependent Number-Related Errors

In the event of a dependent number error resulting in a PRISM match problem, steps must be taken to correct the error in order to allow PRISM to continue the matching process. These errors are often difficult to identify and correct because PACES does not store prior information and often this information is not readily available in the case record. Customer Support Services will contact the local office director/designee with instructions as to how to proceed with identification and correction of each error.

Because of the difficulties in resolving PRISM match problems, it is essential that case workers always check PACES and follow the above outlined procedures to avoid dependent number errors and enhance case accuracy.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, have your Hotline designee call Customer Support Services at (617) 348-5290.